



Job title: Policy and Public Affairs Lead

Reporting to: Chief Executive

Salary: £35,000-£38,000

Hours: 35 per week

Work Location: 18 York Place, Edinburgh EH1 3EP (with hybrid working options)

Benefits: 25 days annual leave, 7 public holidays, 6 floating and office closure days, 6% pension employer contribution (terms and conditions apply), death in service insurance.

Who we are

Voluntary Health Scotland are the national membership organisation and network for voluntary sector health organisations in Scotland. Our vision is a healthier, fairer Scotland served by a thriving voluntary health sector. Our mission is to improve people's health and wellbeing by providing an effective national network for voluntary health organisations. We work with our members and others to address health inequalities, to improve health related policy, systems and partnership working, and to help people and communities to live healthier and fairer lives.

We are a registered Scottish charity and a company limited by guarantee, governed by our Board of Trustees/Directors. Our team comprises of five employees. We receive financial support from the Scottish Government, for which we deliver an annual programme of work.

What we do

Collaboration and networking: we promote more integrated working and co-produced solutions between the voluntary and statutory sectors in order to promote equality and reduce health inequalities. We facilitate networking and we promote partnership working, co-production and mutual support across our membership.

Promotion and advocacy: we amplify the voice of the voluntary health sector by providing our members with a wide range of opportunities to share their experience, expertise, views and ideas with wider audiences. We gather, build and promote evidence about the third sector's contribution to health agendas and outcomes.

Leadership and influence: we bring the voluntary health sector's voice and expertise into national policy making. We do this by connecting our members with Scottish Government, NHS and other public sector decision makers. We support a two-way flow of information and ideas, and provide a platform for our members to be critical friends to policy makers.

Knowledge into action: we raise our members' awareness of health priorities, we analyse and translate policy for and with our members. We provide our members with a wide range of information and opportunities for learning, knowledge exchange and creation, development and action.

Purpose of the role

1. To deliver outcomes that further VHS's vision and help deliver its mission.
2. Provide leadership to VHS's policy work. Plan and deliver an effective programme of policy, research and public affairs work, with a strong emphasis on engagement and communication with members, networks and other external stakeholders.
3. To work collaboratively and pro-actively with the Chief Executive and the wider team members to support delivery of VHS's overall strategy 2025-2028 and annual work programme.

Key results areas

1. Develop and lead the implementation of a policy and public affairs strategy to complement the overall VHS Strategy. You will utilise VHS's membership, Health Policy Officers Network, Cross Party Group on Health Inequalities, Scottish Government and wider stakeholder relationships.
2. Actively engage VHS members in the full range of VHS's policy and public affairs work, using a wide range of communication methods, including face-to-face, written and digital.
3. Provide facilitation and coordination for the VHS Health Policy Officers Network comprising of 50+ Policy Officers from across VHS Members. Provide leadership to develop collective influencing and advocacy opportunities.
4. Identify, analyse and communicate relevant policy developments and their impact on health to VHS members and staff. Translate complex policy ideas for third sector audiences. Prepare high quality responses on formal policy consultations. Prepare and disseminate briefings, reports and case studies.
5. Provide effective platforms to support VHS members to amplify their voice and influence including contributing to national working groups, cross-party groups and similar. Establish systems for disseminating feedback from these groups to the wider VHS membership.
6. Lead on the development and implementation of research projects to further embed VHS's reputation for publishing valuable impact research. Survey and analyse members' activities, impact and priorities and build a robust evidence base on the third sector's contribution to health to drive impact reporting.
7. Contribute actively to the production and delivery of content for external communications to support VHS's policy and public affairs work. Collaborate closely with colleagues to manage the VHS website and deliver an effective social media strategy.
8. Collaborate with the Events and Engagement Lead and other colleagues in the development and delivery of successful policy events. Deliver presentations and workshops on policy topics. Produce 'Key Message' summaries and minutes from VHS events where required.

8. Represent VHS and manage active and effective working relationships with a wide range of stakeholder and partner organisations. These include the Scottish Government, NHS, Public Health Scotland, the Scottish Parliament, academic institutions, and a wide range of third sector organisations.
9. Contribute actively and constructively to VHS's overall development, including to its strategic plan and operational plans. Provide appropriate support for the Chief Executive. Provide reports to the Board of Trustees/Directors and VHS's funders as required. Support the drafting of funding and partnership proposals.
10. Take responsibility for administration of own work and communications, including electronic filing and data input to Salesforce (VHS customer relationship management system).
11. Be actively committed to your own development and learning. Contribute constructively at your support and appraisal meetings. Be a supportive and flexible team player.
12. Carry out other tasks and duties as required.

Person Specification

This post requires the following essential experience, competences and knowledge:

1. Demonstrable understanding of policy making structures and processes in Scotland. Strong track record of engagement with government policy development systems/processes and with policy makers, preferably in relation to the Scottish Government (for example, writing responses to public consultations or serving on policy groups).
2. Able to represent VHS as an authority on health policy and build relationships with a range of stakeholders including member organisations, decision makers, politicians and policy makers. Confident in being able to facilitate discussions, deliver presentations to large audiences and meet senior stakeholders on behalf of VHS.
3. Experience of public affairs work and engagement with politicians and Scottish Government officials within the parliamentary system.
4. Able to write high quality material that communicates content/ideas clearly and compellingly. Examples may include reports, briefings, articles, manifestos, blogs and consultations.
5. Able to gather, analyse and use data to develop briefings, reports and communications for different audiences.
6. Comfortable working within a small team and organisation, working collaboratively to utilise individual expertise in a fast-paced working environment. Strong interpersonal and communications skills required.

7. Conscientious and committed to producing accurate and high-quality work at all times.
8. High degree of self-motivation: ability to take the initiative, to prioritise and manage own workload and to learn fast.
9. Ability to stay calm under pressure, work to tight deadlines and find flexible solutions to problems.
10. Competence and confidence in using IT applications, including Microsoft programmes, digital and social media.
11. Knowledge and understanding of the third sector in Scotland, e.g. through previous paid or voluntary roles.

Experience and knowledge in the following areas would be an advantage:

1. Knowledge and experience specific to health and social care policy and structures within Scotland is highly desirable.
2. Experience of developing and carrying out social research projects.
3. Knowledge and experience of research and evaluation methodologies.
4. Comfortable using a Customer Relations Management System, e.g. Salesforce and website content management software.

Closing date for applications: 9.00 am on Monday 10th March 2025.

Interviews will be held in person between Monday 17th - 21st March 2025.